

25—Greatness and Forgiveness

Matthew 18; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 9:46-50

1. What was the “dispute” the disciples had engaged in while traveling and what did Jesus determine was the answer (see Mark 9:33-35; Luke 9:46-47)?



2. As an illustration, whom did Jesus use as a model of greatness (Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:36-37; Luke 9:47-48)? In what ways must the attitude of this individual be a part of our conversion?

3. What situation is described in the following passages and what does Jesus say is the proper response (Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50)?

4. In Matthew 18:6-9 and Mark 9:42-50 Jesus offers some very tough words for those who would “offend” a little one. What does this passage demand we be willing to do for the sake of others?

5. When one of the “little ones” is offended, then what ought to be the attitude of the servant of God (Matthew 18:10-14)? How should this passage shape our attitude toward evangelism, encouragement, and empathy toward others?

6. Perhaps the subject Jesus teaches in Matthew 18:15-17 is connected to the prior context. When our brother has sinned against us, what ought we be willing to do in the case of a private offense? When you read Matthew 5:23-24 does it matter if we are the offended or the offender?

7. Disputes, problems, and offenses will arise. Sometimes the result will end in reconciliation. Sometimes it will end in the unrepentant sinner being treated as a “heathen and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17). Yet, what impact will the ultimate unity of the brethren have upon our prayer and worship as a whole when God’s will is done (Matthew 18:18-20)?

8. If we will settle our disputes with others, forgiveness must take place. What is it Peter wants to know about forgiveness from Jesus and how does Jesus answer (Matthew 18:21-27)?

9. In the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, what is the point of the comparison between the two situations of debt (Matthew 18:28-34)? What message is Jesus trying to relay to His disciples?

10. The ultimate point of this text might be summarized in two words: Prevention and Forgiveness. Jesus wants us to strive to prevent giving any offense in the first place. Yet, realizing offenses do occur He gives us a pattern for conflict resolution amongst one another. Is there any unresolved conflict in your own life and among your brethren? What is Jesus calling you to do with that situation now?